# SCIENCE FICTION * P.E.E. *

NOV.-DEC. 1975

PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM No. 13/14
The Bulletin Of The Pittsburgh Comix Club November-December, 1975
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Editor: Mark Lerer / 107 Woodland Dr. / Pittsburgh, Pa. / 15228
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# Club Affairs:

Next Meetings: The PCC next does whatever it does on December 13 (our special Christmas bash) and then January 10 (the first meeting of 1976, rooty-toot!). That's the second Saturdays of each month, 6:30 P.M., at Greg Eide's Comics Shop, 636 Butler St., Route 8, Etna.

PITTCON '76 Progress Report:

The most important item is that the dates of the con have been changed to Friday through Sunday, March 12-14, 1976! Please make a note of that. The con will be three days, not two. (The reason for the change is that The Marvel Con will be held April 23-25.) This also means that we have one less month of planning time.

Roy Thomas tells us that since the con dates have been changed, he will be able to attend as our *guest of honor* ! Len Wein and Marv Wolfman have also confirmed!

Cartoonist and Curator of The Cartoon Museum, Jim Ivey, is preparing a show of 30-35 items (political cartoons, and such) to be displayed at PITTCON, all of which will be for sale. There will be a sneak preview session prior to the con for PCC members only to view and select their items of interest! What's also nice is that the club will get a commission on sales. Many thanks to Mr. Ivey for his participation!

A gentleman whose name we'll have next issue (we apologize for the slip-up) who teaches at Community College has done a half-hour videotape show on Dracula for PITTCON. He is also interested is creating a comic book course for C.C. (Now if we could only have his name...! )

We're going all out on PITTCON '76's program book-- a thirty-two page, offset printed, limited-print-run-of-500-issues collection of art done for the con, articles, and con information. If you want to write or draw something for the PITTCON '76 Program Book, or for ad rates, contact Ron Kienzle / 130 Valley St. / Butler, Pa. 16001.

To clarify the rates: $1.25 per day at the door or $2.00 in advance for admission/registration. Dealer tables: $10 per table until January first, after which, $20 per table. See you all there at Duquesne University!!

Personal: Humble Howard Bender, production ace for Marvel, charter PCC member, and all around human being, has (ta-taaa!) announced his engagement to (who else?) Joan Reich! The two are to be wed, we hear, in the summer. Congratulations to the two!

Apologoes: We're sorry that part two of David Finger's series on the rise and fall of Atlas comics isn't in this issue (David missed his deadline). 'Twill return in two months. Also, the report on that Cleveland Con has gone the way of all flesh (apolgies to Bob Youhouse); anyone interested in that Con can pick up details from someone who attended. Ok??

1975

Bragging For This Issue:

Hey, we got news! First, PFF wil be able to print advances of covers of Marvel Comics! Yeah, right here-- you lucky devils get to see the covers of your favorite Marvel books before they appear, thanks to a certain H.B. going through legal channels for us. Tell us what covers you want to see, and we'll try to print them.

PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM was recently reviewed in the prestigious "Critique" department of the reknowned ROCKET'S BLAST/COMICOLLECTOR, and we got a rating of "8" (the scale goes to "10")!

The eternal Don & Maggie Thompson, that institution of fandom, have not only joined the PCC but will be (rain, snow, and gloom of night notwithstanding) doing a column for Your Humble Bulletin.

Ok, Lerer, now that you got your kicks for this month, back to reporting the news.....

Comics News: (we have a little room to keep you informed on the current comic book scene) National is raising its cover price to 30 cents per book, and cutting a page of story from most titles. Boo! Marvel will remain at 25¢ and 18 pages. ***Jim Shooter is working for Marvel again! We think. ***Berni Wrightson has expressed the desire to do a Howard The Duck story. ***Since FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL has been cancelled, most of the ideas for that book will wind up on Gerry Conway's editorial desk; whether they'll become books or not, we don't know*** That's all, folks!

We Got Fanzines:

The second issue of COMIX & FANDOM will be out soon! (Yeah, we've heard that before, but it's being printed as of this writing.) Forty pages of great material for a buck! Send orders to editor Gary Sassaman / SMC 4500 / 1345 Vickroy St. / Pgh., Pa. 15219 and don't forget 25¢ postage!

Gentle Ben Pondexter's entry into the fanzine editing field, B.B. COMICS, an all-story zine with work by Bob Logan, Ben Ruiz, and others, will sell for a buck as soon as it's put together and printed. Highly recommended.

Showtime:

The PCC will be doing a monthly half-hour radio show for listener-supported WYEP-FM (91.5 on the ol' dial). Fifteen minutes of each show will be devoted to general comic book talk (what's going on, and such) with perticipants; the remaining half will feature a special guest interview. We're trying to persuade WYEP to carry that 5-minute FANTASTIC FOUR show, too! When time, hours, and details are finalized, you people will be the first to sample the Pittsburgh Comix Club on the Air!

And Yet Another Editorial:

This is not only the first of the "new" PFF-- bimonthly and twice the previous size-- but the month of November celebrates this publication's first birthday. Those of you who subscribed with issue number one can notice how this thing's grown, and also, those who subscribed with issue number one -- IT'S TIME TO RESUBSCRIBE, LIKE WE SAID LAST ISSUE, SO POP FOUR BUCKS INTO AN ENVELOPE AND SEND IT TO BEN ALREADY!!

* * *

## Thoughts On Science Fiction

by Howard P. Siegel

Since the theme of this issue is science fiction, two thoughts come to my mind, both unrelated. But before getting into them, I might caution myself and readers about referring to the subject as "sci fi." Evidently it's a taboo word amongst science fiction buffs. I recall doing a five part series on science fiction's history some years ago, and because of my literary impropriety, received many seething letters. So much for the rules....

Since the ancient days of Icarus and his wax wings to "Space: 1999," science fiction has always been a popular and lasting topic of literature. Be it an oral fable of Greek mythology or a recent paperback, people have always found such fare awe-inspiring. I can't think of an avenue of storytelling which has a more lasting career than science fiction, simply because material can never run out. When Buck Rogers spoke of the atom bomb in 1924, that idea was played until 1945. When trips to the moon were fascinating, writers could use the concept to advantage until Neil Armstrong touched the lunar surface. And it shall go on and on, for there are still the wonders within our galaxy yet to become realities. The science fiction reader is the perfect word consumer for a writer, because the latter can overstep what he might consider reality or probability, and still not find himself guffawed at. In science fiction, everything and anything is possible and strange grammar is acceptible.

I've stated before that when a vessel from another planet does arrive on Earth, it would be to mankind's advantage if the first human the aliens come in contact with is a science fiction fan. Then they will receive a sensible reception rather than one of fright, panic, distortion, or fatality.

continued

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
CAPTAIN MARVEL! THE SUB-MARINER! THE INHUMANS! AND MORE!
THE TITANS
9p
BONUS: A FULL-COLOUR POSTER JUST FOR YOU!
FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE!
BEGINNING: THE ADVENTURES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES!
THE TITANS
T.M. AND MARVEL COMICS INTERNATIONAL LTD.

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A science fiction afficionado is never caught in the rat race of being gauche, nor must he absorb quickly the latest "in" novel in order to be part of the smart set at tomorrow's party. He can find himself instead immersed fascinatingly in a quiet, extensive discussion with polite people when the subject is science fiction past or present. Call it a form of literature which gives contentment.

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We PCC ers are familiar with the fruitless efforts of major publishers to invade the pulp field for new material: detectives, sky aces, cowboys. They never made it. But science fiction has. What sustained the field during the late forties and early early fifties? Wally Wood's work for EC. Al Williamson's efforts for ACG and Harvey. DC's "Mystery In Space" and "Strange Adventures" followed by the likes of "Tales Of The Unexpected," House of Secrets," and "House Of Mystery," all silent but profitable stablemates that came about as a result of the eternal popularity of science fiction in its many forms. And let's not forget that whenever the form was tampered with, the experiment failed. I uae as examples the brief DC adventure into swords and sorcery. But when that company played the game fairly and stuck to its rules, they had success; my example is Kamandi and the New Gods trilogy which will be returning shortly.

Star Trek...two words that have found a place in the history of television, cult establishment, and paperback publishing. Nothing more need be said. "2001: A Space Odyssey." Box office history. H.G. Wells and Jules Verne-- literary history. And my nomination for science fi ction in comic history: Adam Strange. This character brought a dimension of saneness to the pictorial medium in that he used brain rather than brawn to solve the plights of an adopted alien world. In that respect he separated himself from the category of juvenile two-dimensional characterization. In ten or twenty years from now, when technology has made plausible the requisites of travel to other worlds, Adam Strange will fit in as believably as Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock do now when relegating fictitious people into future perspectives.

Isaac Asimov, a genius who has penned tomes on subjects ranging from biology to a definitive analysis of knighthood, will tell you that the subject of his robotic theory always comes up at lectures. As Superman is to the merchandising world of America, Perry Rhodan, a science fiction character, is to Europe. Gold Key rarely reprints any of its old comics, but it did so with "Magnus, Robot Fighter," thanks greatly to Russ Manning's excellent art. The list goes on and on.

Since the name of our organization is the Pittsburgh Comix Club, my final word on science fiction should relate to our prime interest. It's a fact that science fiction is a basis for most of our comic books, past and present. Think about this: Superman, who is credited for starting it all when, in the mid-thirties it appeared that nespaper reprints were failing to lure a buying public, is really a science fiction creation. The multitudinous imitations are likewise. So it is appropos that our editor should select science fiction as the catalyst this month to bring us all together and on to more things penelological.

* * *

Lancaster

## Perry's Editor

by Ben Pondexter

Being in New York this summer, the chance to find our what was coming up next with Perry Rhodan was too good to pass up. We called Ace Books editor Pat Lebrutte for an interview.

Pat has black hair, and even smoking a pipe looks much too young to be an editor. In fact this was one of our first questions. Twenty-seven is not young for a science fiction editor, Pat explained, as most people in the science fiction end have a lot of experience in producing fanzines, which does teach a lot of the background needed for editing.

Lebrutte started reading at three, and among his introduction to science fiction came H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and others. He graduated from Fairfield University and took his masters from Hunter College in American History. He started at Ace Books, of all places, in the mail room, went on to he a troubleshooter in the accounting department, and from there passed into the science fiction department, where he thinks being paid to read is a great idea. At the moment he is the whole department; he doesn't even have a secretary. Hopefully, as Ace moves back toward sci ence fiction in its line, this will change.

Ace just started a new form of monthly sales figures to give them a better idea of what is selling and what isn't. It was the old system that decided that Perry Rhodan's frequency could be stepped up to three books per month. It turns out that that was not such a good idea, and so for the present we have two books coming out per month, with the "Atlan" series in limbo for the moment.

Like all publishers today, Ace is aware of its problem with distributors, and they are "working on it." One of the things that have done was establish a "Perry Rhodan Space Center" which will carry the full line of books. Their new computerized operation, geared to fit their individual company needs, will hopefully tell quickly how everything is going.

One of the first centers was in Huston where Ace found someone willing to carry all their books. Pat mentioned that the book business, like comics, is one in which you cannot know how you're doing for at least six months after publication. Returns which started during the depression are the curse of the business. Forty-six percent, in slaes, of a print run is considered the break-even point.

This summer, by the way, should see the missing three Perry Rhodan novels in a box set. They will not be numbered. With luck, this will make things easier on collectors.

Ace is moving on new science fiction again. Pat Lebrutte, if you'll remember, not only edits Perry Rhodan but the entire science fiction line. If you have suggestions, or changes you'd like to see in the books, Pat said, write him at Ace books and tell him what you have in mind. One big area fans might help with is the matter of covers; let him know what you like and don't like. Letters are the only ways we can get something like that changed.

A final note: The Perry Rhodan Convention has been changed to Washington D.C., January 2-4, 1976. Perhaps several of us will attend.

In short, an interesting session with Pat Lebrutte, Perry's editor.

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# THE SF CONVENTION REGISTER

The SF Convention Register is updated frequently (?) and sent in return for 25¢ and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No subscriptions are accepted, but to insure getting each issue as it comes out, each time you receive an issue send back a quarter and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the postmark date of the issue just received (when I get orders, I check the postmark date noted: if there has been no new issue since then, I hold the envelope for the next issue; otherwise, I send out the current issue in the envelope immediately). Conventions are now listed in chronological order (the old system I used with the calendar turned out to be too hard to decipher for most readers). I cannot be responsible for any errors in the listings--always check with the con promoters before making any plans. Send all information and orders to: Erwin S. Strauss, 7911 Riggs Road #105, Adelphi, MD 20873.

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Information may be reprinted with or without credit (my format here makes it hard for me to credit sources, so I don't bother). Below is a key to the listings in the Register. The listings don't always strictly follow this format, but when they don't the deviations should be obvious. The three numbers at the left of each listing are the month, day and year that the listing was last updated. When no year is given as the date for a con, assume it is less than one year from the date of the last update. To cut down on the flood of conventions, I've adopted a policy of giving priority to cons in North America oriented towards straight SF, Fringe cons (Comics, Star Trek, Films, Nostalgia, etc.) and cons overseas may be listed if space permits and they are of sufficient general interest.

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● Name of Convention<br>City of Convention<br>Start Date & Time<br>End Date & Time<br>Special Events (Art Show, Masquerade, Banquet, Awards, etc.)<br>Name for Art Show Info<br>Street & No. (Art Show)<br>City, State, Zip(ArtShow)<br>Art Show Info Phone<br>HuxterChecksPayableTo | Name of Con Hotel<br>St. & No. of Hotel<br>City, State, Zip(Hotel)<br>Hotel Phone<br>SingleRates, DoubRates<br>Special Interests, Featured Themes, etc.<br>Name for Huxter Info<br>St. & No. (Huxter)<br>City, State, Zip(Huxter)<br>Huxter Info Phone<br>RatesforHuxterTable | SupportingMembRate<br>AttendMemRate(Now)<br>AttendMemRate(Door)<br>Banquet Rate<br>Golf's, Big Names, Toastmasters, etc., etc., etc., etc.<br>Nearbyhotel/Motel<br>St. & No. (Hot/Mot)<br>City, State, Zip(H/M)<br>Hotel/Motel Phone<br>SingleRates, DoubRates | Name forInfo/Memb<br>St. & No. (Info/Memb)<br>City, State, Zip (I/M)<br>Info/Memb Phone<br>MemChecksPayableTo<br>EstimatedAttendance<br>UpperAttendanceLimit<br>NearbyHotel/Motel<br>St. & No. (Hot/Mot)<br>City, State, Zip(H/M)<br>Hotel/Motel Phone<br>SingleRates, DoubRates |

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● WINDYCON 2
9 Chicago, Il
20 Fri., Oct. 3
75 Sun., Oct 5
Aussiecon slides
Ad Hoc Masquerade
Carol Resnick(ArtShow)
Rt. 1, Box 26, St.Mary's Rd
Libertyville, IL 60048

Ascot House
11th and Mich. Ave.
Chicago, Il.
$19sing, $24doub,
$30trip, $35quad

Rusty Hevelin(Huxters)
6594 GermantownPike
Miamisburg, OH 45342

$4 advance
$5 at the door
Golf: Bob Tucker
Fan Golf: Tom Stopa

Toastmaster: Bob Passavoy

WINDYCON
Box 2572
Chicago, IL 60690

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● OCTOCON 12
Sandusky, OH
9 Fri., Oct. 17
20 Sun., Oct. 19
75

Greentree Motor Inn
1935 Cleveland Rd.
Sandusky, OH
$14sing, $20doub(1 bed)
$22doub (2 beds)

Relaxacon (indoor pool)

$3

Larry&Celia Smith
194 E. Tulane Road
Columbus, OH 43202

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● RAILCON ONE
East Coast Trains
9 Fri., Oct. 17
20 Sun., Oct. 19
75 Cookout Banquet (in Cumberland, MD) w/ steak and lime jello

(Will take place on trains between Greensboro, NC, and Northampton, MA, with convenient connections to Boston. Largest amount of time between Wash., DC, and NYC.)

$4 advance
$5 at the door
$5 banquet (advance)
$6 banquet (at the door)
Golf: Laurence M. Janifer
(above rates exclusive of rail fare)
For details, phone (301)439-4321(eves)

Erwin S. Strauss
7911 Riggs Rd. #105
Adelphi, MD 20783
Checks to: Erwin S. Strauss

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● MILEHICON VII
6 Denver, CO
22 Fri., Oct. 24
75 Sun., Oct. 26

Sheraton Airport Inn
Denver, CO

$3 advance
$5 at the door
Guest: Joanna Russ
Fan Guest: Bob Vardeman

Ted Peak
1555 Detroit #1
Denver, CO 80206

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● ANONYCON
Niagara Falls, NY
9 Fri., Oct. 24
20 Mon., Oct. 27
75 Art Show and Huxter Room, write: Rick & Louie, 39 Johnston Ave. So., Hamilton, NJ 08609

Niagara Hilton

$2 supporting
$4 advance
$6 at the door

Karen Klinck
142 Snughaven Court
Tonawanda, NY 14150

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● ICON I
9 Iowa City, IA
20 Fri., Oct. 31
75 Sun., Nov. 2
Masquerade Ball

Ironmen Inn
Coralville, IA
$16sing, $21doub

$5 advance
$7 at the door
Guest: Roger Zelazny

Greg Frost
Box 510
Iowa City, IA 52240
Checks to: Greg Frost

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● WORLD FANTASY CON
Providence, RI
9 Fri., Oct. 31
20 Sun., Nov. 2
75

Holiday Inn
Providence, RI

Fantasy and Supernatural Horror

$12.50 advance
$15 at the door
$7.50 banquet
Guest: Robert Bloch
Toastmaster: Gahan Wilson

Kirby McCauley
P. O. Box 135
Middle Village Sta.
Middle Village, NY 11379
Checks: WorldFantasy Convention
Attendance Limit: 500
(Banquet Limit: 200)

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● TUSCON III
Tucson, AZ
6 Fri., Nov. 7, 12 pm
22 Mon., Nov. 10, 5 pm
75 Banquet

Tucson Inn
127 W. Drachman
Tucson, AZ 85705

$4 till 11/1
$5 after
(for $10, supermembership including dinner with Guest)
Guest: Gordon Eklund

TUSCON III
P. O. Box 49196
Tucson, AZ 85719

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● SFRA 1975 CONF.
Miami, FL
9 Thu., Nov. 13
20 Sat., Nov. 15
75

Florida International University

Science Fiction Research Association (academic conference)

Prof. Chas. Elkins
English Dept., Fla. Int'l. Univ.
Tamiami Trail
Miami, FL 33144

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● MEXICON I
9 Guadalajara, Mexico
20 Sat., Nov. 22
75 Sun., Nov. 23
Tequila factory tour (for early arrivals who notify the con)

Posada Guadalajara
$11.20 single,
$12.80 double

$3 supporting
$5 att($6 after 10/1) (checks payable to Eljot Weinstein)
Golf: Mack Reynolds
$7.20 banquet

Eljot Weinstein
APDO 6-869
Guadalajara 6, Jalis
MEXICO

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● LA 2000
6 Los Angeles, CA
22 Fri., Dec. 5
75 Sun., Dec. 7

International Hotel
Los Angeles, CA
(In honor of 2000th LASFaS meeting)

LASFaS
11360 Ventura Blvd.
Studio City, CA 9160

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● HALFACON
6 New Orleans, LA
22 Fri., Dec. 5
75 Sun., Dec. 7

International Hotel
New Orleans, LA
Relaxacon

$5 membership
$5 add'l for banquet

HALFACON
Box 8466
New Orleans, LA 70

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● CHATTA-KHON
Chattanooga, TN
9 Fri., Jan. 2, 1976
20 Sun., Jan. 4, 1976
75 Art Show, Banquet

Art show:
Ken Moore
647 Devon Drive
Nashville, TN 37220

Sheraton Inn-Chattanooga South
I75 & US41N
Chattanooga, TN
$19sing., $23doub. (till 12/1/75)

Huxter Tables: $10 (membership incl. w/first table)

$5 in advance
$5 at the door
$6.50 Banquet
Golf: Cliff Amos
Also: Keith Laumer
Toastmstr: Mead Frierson III

Irvin Koch
c/o 835 Chattanooga Bank Building
Chattanooga, TN 37
Checks to Irvin Koch
Estimated Attendance 100-150

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● RHOCON I
Washington, DC
9 Fri., Jan. 2
20 Sun., Jan. 4
75 Art Show
Masquerade

Sheraton-Park Hotel
2660 Woodley Road
Washington, DC
$20sing, $25doub
$10trip, $32quad
Huxter table: $20

$2
$7

Forrest & Wendayne Ackerman, Walter Ernsting("Clark Darlton"), Gray Morrow, Ace Books execs.

RHOCON I
9324 Tovito Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

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● CONFUSION 12
Ann Arbor, MI
9 Fri., Jan. 23
20 Sun., Jan. 25
75 Art Show

Pro Golf: Lloyd Biggle
Fan Golf: Bill Bowers

Ro Nagey
240 Michigan Union
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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● ROME CON
Rome, GA
1 Feb., 1976
4
75

Gary Steele
Box 2908
Rome, GA 30161

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● BOSKONE 13
6 Boston, MA
22 Fri., Feb. 13
75 Sun., Feb. 15

Golf: Poul Anderson

NESFA
Box G, MIT BranchPO
Cambridge, MA 02139

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● DESERT CON 4
Tucson, AZ
9 Thu., March 4
20 Mon., March 7
75

University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

$5 advance

Robert Silverberg

DESERT CON 4
SUPO 10,000
Tucson, AZ 85720
(602)884-3546
or 884-3674

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● MARCON 11
Columbus, OH
6 Fri., March 19
22 Sun., March 21
75 Huxters, Banquet, Film Premiere

Neil House Motor Hotel
41 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 221-5221

Golf: Joe Haldeman

Larry Smith
194 E. Tulane
Columbus, OH 43202

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● LUNACON
New York, NY
9 Fri., April 9
20 Sun., April 11
75

Walter R. Cole
1171 E. 8th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11230

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● MINNICON 11
Minneapolis, MN
9 Fri., April 16
20 Sun., April 18
75

Rev Swanson
2301 Elliot Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 5540

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● BALTICON 10
Baltimore, MD
9 Fri., April 16
20 Sun., April 18
75 Riverworld art exhibit, Spanish Inquisition on stage, Amateur Films

Hunt Valley Inn
(near Baltimore)

Fan Golf's: Suzanne Tompkins, Jerry Kaufman

Norman Schwarz
7901 Oakwood Road
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

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● WESTERCON 29
Los Angeles, CA
6 Thu., July 2 1976
22 Sun., July 5, 1976
75 Banquet
Costume Ball
Art Show

International Hotel
Los Angeles, CA

$3 supporting
$5 in advance
$6 at the door

Pro: H. L. Gold
Fan: Gregg Calkins

Westercon 29
P. O. Box 5384
Mission Hills, CA 91345

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● MIDAMERICON
Kansas City, MO
6 Thu., Sept. 1 1976
22 Mon., Sept. 7 1976
75 Masquerade, Banquet, Hugo awards, IWCampbell awards
John & Bjo Trimble
Membership rates go up on

Hotel Muehlebach
Baltimore & Wyandotte
Kansas City, MO 64105
(816) 471-1400

34th World Science Fiction Convention
Allan Wilde

$5 till 1/1/76, then $6
$10, $15, $20, $25, $50
$50 at the door

Pro: Robert A. Heinlein
Fan: George Barr
TstMstr: Bob Tucker

9/1/75, 1/1/76, 5/1/76, and 8/1/76

MIDAMERICON
P. O. Box 221
Kansas City, MO 6410

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● SUN CON
Orlando, FL
9 Labor Day Weekend, 1977
20
75 Art Show, Masquerade, Hugo Banquet

Sheraton Twin Towers
Orlando, FL

35th World Science Fiction Convention

## Pattern

fiction by David Sims

I am the horrid offspring of fire and steel, christened in the oaken water barrell of an eastern balcksmith, amid the shrill hiss and blinding blanket of steam. I live in a long, narrow corridor of eternal night which reeks ofblood and I venture forst to rend and maim and kill. I am a war sword. I live in the calloused sweaty palm of my master, Tor-nal-sah, Prince Of Hell, Slayer Of Wes terners, and Evil. It's a wretched existance, as I live to kill.

continued next page

I ride now, encased and comforted by Scabbard, attached to the belt of my master. The blood of countless westerners stains my cold, glimmering hide. My brothers and I have destroyed another village of men, the sixth in the past three suns. I haven't been cleansed or honed in longer than I recall. Existance is merely one hideous pattern of my dark casement, then the grip of my master, the bite of flesh, the flow of blood, the shattering of bone and cartilege, and jostling, the constant motion of horse and the eternal night of my scabbard once again. We ride ever westward.

Night.

I lay as I have lain for coutless years, beside Tor-nal-sah's pallet. Waiting. Waiting for the grip that will once again send me arcing and cutting and biting and killing. I can't rest. I wait.

Dawn.

We ride again. Suddenly, the gait of the horse increases. He is charging. Now I hear the hoarse war cries of my masters hoard and the answering call from a further distance. I am flug outward and the sun glints on my surface. I soar through the pale sky and I clash with a curved brother or inferior metal. I shatter him and continue down. Now! Now I bite through the bronzed helm of a western nomad and I taste his blood and marrow and reverse direction and I block brothers and I cut and I shatter and I kill. For hours, I am propelled by the muscles and sinews of my master's forearm. I am made the harbinger of death for a number of souls.

Finally,

It's over.

I hear the moans of the dying and wounded, blood around my haft. Tor-nal-sah is wounded. His blood covers my jewels, drowning them. There are a fe of my brothers left. The others have found the peace and solitude of rejectio

Ride.

Kill.

Darkness.

Ride.

Kill.

Darkness.

We sweep across the countryside of the western kingdoms, leaving in our wake a sea of terror and bloodshed.

Night.

I am bathed and honed. My wounds and scars are checked. I pray for imperfections, but my creator knew his trade I'm still fit. Tor-nal-sah lies down. There are seven of my brothers left; we are the damned. We have ridden for ages. I want to die, but, no, my master will ride forever through the west. I know naught of royal conspiracies nor intrigue not under what king I'm wielded I know only how to kill. It stinks. I am tired and I want to die.

A grip and I am rising, silently taken by an iron hand, a foreign hand. I look down and see my slumbering master. I am moving downward at a rate which is ludicrous for my weight. Slowly, slowly, I descend and see the sentry lying in a pool or red. Throat slashed from ear to ear. Now I see my weilder. He's a gold-haired westerner covered with dried blood and his eyes blaze with with the intensity of madness flamed by some unfathomable hatred. I am down now. Tor-nal-sah lies headless beneath me. Now! Now I am

continued

free! My wielder will drop me , and scurry off into the night, and I will lie in bushes and rust and die! Throw me away! Cast me off into the river and let me die!

But no. The warrior is turning me over, testing my weight to his palm. He admires the jewels at my hilt, my creaftsmanship. He smiles grimly and thrusts me into the scabbard at his side.

I ride now on another horse attached to another belt. But my task is the same. I ride, I kill, and I am sheathed in a long narrow corridor of eternal night. I ride for vengence now, but it doesn't matter. The purpose I serve remains unchanged.

It is a wretched existance.

I am tired and I want to die.

* * *

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE!!
MARVEL TREASURY OF OZ
THE MARVELOUS
LAND OF OZ
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Featuring THE FABULOUS CREATIONS OF L. FRANK BAUM AS SEEN IN THE MGM MOVIE MASTERPIECE "The WIZARD of OZ!"
ROMITA
THEY'RE BACK!! the SCARECROW AND THE TINTINNABULATIN' TIN MAN!
(AND WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT'S NEW IN OZ!)
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Hey, now this isn't funny. Neil Renton's "The Comic Poll" has received so little participation that the column may have to be discontinued. The last poll was taken in PFF #12. It's very simple-- just gather up a list of the comic books you've read in the last month or so, and rate them on a scale of 1-10 (10 highest)!! What's wrong with you people? Participate today. Please send your ratings for compilation to Neil Renton, Jr. / 2616 Lindenwood Dr. / Upper St. Clair, Pa. 15241. Thank you.

Note to nit-pickers: Ben Pondexter's "All Around" column, and "The Files of Youhouse" return next issue on a permanent basis.

* * *

I Write Comics!

a true confession by Jim Shooter

Often when I am asked by a new acquaintance the inevitable question, "what do you do?" I am tempted to answer that I'm a plumber, an accountant, a salescleark, or anything else that will satisfy their polite, mild curiousity, and allow them to simply fit me into the proper occupational pigeonhole in their mind. Whenever I answer truthfully that I write comic books, there always follows a brief silence, then the question, "what?". I repeat, "I write comic books." The second time some people let the subject drop, eyeing me suspiciously, but most require an explanation and then a discussion. Better to have a pigeonhole. It's not that I don't love the attention-- it's not that I object to discussing my job-- but somehow it's not the same kind of discussion that would follow a statement like "I'm the Secretary of State," or " I'm the fellow who pulls the switch at executions," or "I designed the World Trade Center." It must be terriffic to be dignified, controversial, or important. People think of comic book writing as somehow being cute. Invariably, as I explain my trade, I can see my listener making a new pigeonhole in his mind for my ilk, right beside the flag-pole sitters and the folks who hand-paint neckties. Cute indeed!

I'm afraid the Batman television show of a few years back has done my profession irreparable harm in terms of public relations. People didn't realize that the television show, with its "camp" humor, inane situations, ridiculous dialogue and constant redundancy of plot was a parody of the comics it was loosely based on.

Actually, comic books, as a genre, are much more similar to "Star Trek." An element of fantasy is involved, in the case of the T.V. show, a future-era star ship, but from there on, everything proceeds logically. There is drama, action, suspense, and yes, humor-- but I doubt if many would label "Star Trek," or the comics, if they read them, as silly.

Of course, a differentiation must be made here between comics such as SUPERMAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, and a host of other hero books, mystery books, adventure books, and monster books, and their junior counterparts of Donald Duck, Richie Rich, Casper and all the other funny animal and junior humor type books which I feel are more appropriately called "funnies."

At any rate, it just isn't as easy as most would think to write the adventures of an extraterrestrial schizoid superbeing whose feelings of alienation and rejection cause him to devote his exceptional abilities to the good of his adopted homeworld in a relentless subconcious effort to be needed and belong. Superman fights crime deadpan. He is serious. The stories are treated as if they were history being unfolded. We are creating a legend here. The readers demand it.

But aren't the readers children? Of course! This is precisely why the fantasy must be realistic and air-tight. I've often heard it stated that children have remarkable and vivid imaginations. Wrong! Entirely wrong. Children have next to no imagination; they cannot create fantasies because fantasies are built on experience, and children have little experience. The truth is that children need fantasy; they devour it hungrily. They live it vicariously. They exult in it. They are fantasy junkies. As they grow

continued next page

older, I believe the need for fantasy does not diminish, though how the need is filled may change. Which brings us to the older comics fans. Are they kids who never grew up? Some kind of throwbacks or introverts hiding in fantasy fortresses? I think not. I think most likely they have found something they like, something they can just plain enjoy on many levels and do so despite anyone's opinions. I think it very odd that the doctor who lives down the street, builds model airplanes and subscribed to "Aero Modeller" (one of hundreds of publications on the subject) without driving away his clientele, could probably not be seen reading a comic book, at least without drawing some very strange looks.

Probably the worst fault of comics is that they are commercial, in nature. However, contrary to common belief, writing a comic book is not simply a matter if choosing either the Riddler, the Catwoman, or Mr. Freeze to fight Batman, and pluggingwhichever character into the formula plot, changing "pow" to "zonk" and "Gee whiz, Batman" to "Gosh, Batman" in a couple of panels. Comic book writing is very competitive and demanding. A writer who runs out of ideas quickly finds himself pumping gas or polishing cars for a living.

The emphasis is on new motivations, new situations, new plots, and new action. It is definitely one of the most creative media, probably running neck and neck with science fiction. Is it art? Not in the sense that it is created for its own sake--not if you believethat an artist is one who creates for himself to satisfy his need for expression. A better

continued

question is, "Is it artful?". Definitely. It takes great skill to make an excellent comic book, the same kind of skill an artist employs. The difference is the direction. Comic books are made to sell. A few books have been done, from time to time, as strictly creative efforts rather than commercial ones. Just as great art sometimes fails to please the masses, these efforts have largely failed on the market.

So what does this mean? Are we comic book people, despite our best, to be degraded for our lot? Are we forever third class citizens of the arts? Will things ever change? Can a downtrodden comics writer find respect and happiness in Pittsburgh, Pa. ? I don't know-- but I, for one, for now, will take my place beside the flagpole sitter-- but I will stand very tall.

* * *

## Review: Enchanted Pilgrimmage by Clifford D. Simak.

by Ron Kienzle

Alternate universes are a stock gimmick of science fiction writers. The Enchanted Pilgrimmage evolves three such universes. The first universe, where all the action of the book takes place, is a world like Earth in the middle ages. The Catholic Church is the main governing body for the known world, probably Europe. But by 1975 the Church has evolved into a frightening force. The inquisition has become the military arm of the church, and some members use their power for their own ends. Goblins, elves, and other such mythical creatures live in this world. They have been driven out of their old homes by humans and are now confined to the Wasteland, and the Borderland between it and human controlled land.

The plot concerns a pilgrimmage undertaken by a young scholar named Mark Cornwall. Cornwall has found tantilizing clues to the existence of the Old Ones, a group of beings said to live in the wasteland, thought to have much knowledge unknown to mankind.

Unfortunately, those of the inquisition have discovered Cornwall's intentions, despite his efforts to conceal them, and follow the man. They plan to kill him and journey into the Wasteland and destroy the Old Ones.

Along the way, Gib of the marshes, Snively the Gnome, Hal of the Hollow Tree and his friend Coon, a not-quite-native girl Mary and Oliver a rafter goblin, join Cornwall.

This book will inevitably be compared to The Lord Of The Rings. Both have humans, more or less, and enchanted being battling the forces of good or evil to gain their goal. But Enchanted Pilgrimmage is a fuller, more rational book. The evil battled is not a single, omnipotent force that must be destroyed. It is, rather, a more true-to-life evil. The corrupt inquisitors, the develish Hellhounds, the mysterious circles of life: to defeat one or all is not to destroy evil or escape all danger. Just as there are different, unrelated forms of evil in our own particular world, there is on this world. The people in this book are real. Their reasons for action are real and solid. In the Tolkein trilogy, only the Hobbits and

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Gandalf seem "human." The rest of the characters live for the greater, abstract "good vs. evil."

What about the other two worlds that I haven't discussed? You'll just have to read the book; to write about them here would ruin the pleasure of reading The Enchanted Pilgrimmage.

And reading the book was a pleasure. Mr. Simak is one of the best writers I've read, science fiction or mainstream, and Enchanted Pilgrimmage is one of his strongest works. Read it. You'll like it.

* * *

Comic Books In Pitt's Rare Book Room? report by Charles Aston

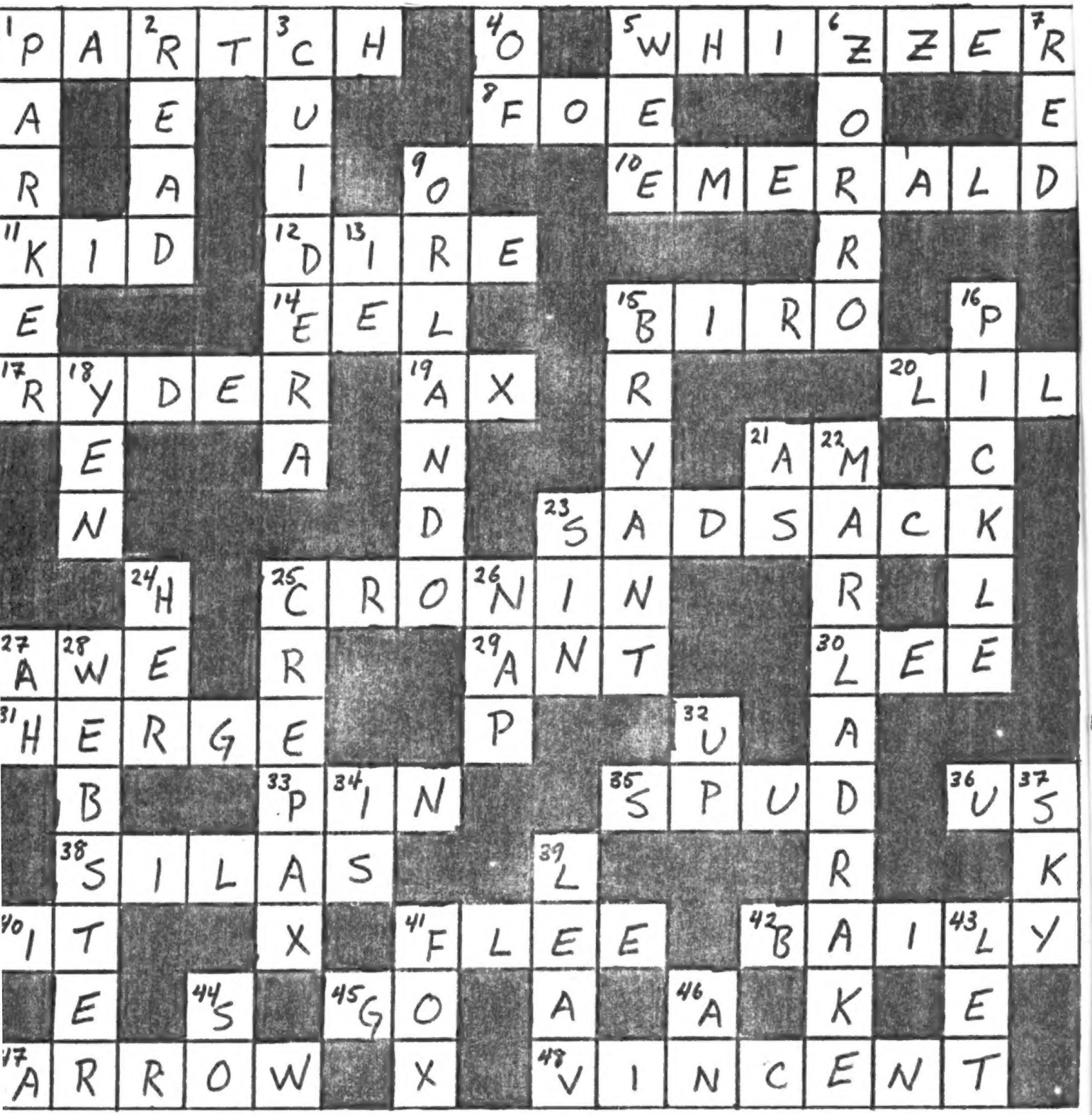
Yes. Members of the Pittsburgh Comix Club will be able to view over two hundred of their comic books and pulp magazines on loan exhibit in the Special Collections Reading Room of the University Of Pittsburgh's Libraries between now and January 30, 1976. The Special Collections Dept. is pleased to be able to exhibit these primary sources of twentieth century "popular culture." Members of the club, under the careful scrutiny of Ben Pondexter, have carefully selected comic books and pulp magazines from their private collections for exhibit. The exhibit will present a panorama of comic and pulp publishing from the turn of the century to the present day. We predict this exhibit will be one of the most popular and informative we have ever mounted.

Why is Special Collections interested in comic books and pulps?

Our more tradition-oriented users and patrons assume that our proper area of concern should be "rare" books and old manuscript collections, but we are also acquiring, developing, and exhibiting source materials from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of our present archival and subject collections, such as the Archives of Industrial Society and The Curtis Theatre Collection, are not rare book collections but are comprised of such diverse artifacts of modern cultural and social history as theatre programs, broadsides, election records, Pittsburgh ethnic newspapers, photographs, etc. Recently, for example, the Special Collections Dept. received two gifts comprising four hundred paperback science fiction titles. Among such diverse kinds of material there is a general theme: they are all primary evidence of American cultural, social, economic, and artistic history. Comics and pulps likewise are becoming more recognized today for their similar value. The changes which have occurred over time in the artwork, thematic material, characterization, and even language are all significant to the cultural historian. The awareness of the significance of comics and popular magazines has largely been brought home because of the efforts individual collectors who have always, almost instinctively, realized this importance. Like the most esoteric rare book collector, the collector or comic books or pulp magazines demonstrates the same love, care, and knowledge about his or her collection. Also like the rare book collector, the comic fan is willing and eager to share his or her enthusiasm and knowledge with others. Thanks to this sense of sharing, we at Pitt will be able to enjoy and learn from the collections of members of the Pittsburgh Comix Club.

* * *

SPACED: 1999
BY SABER 75
THE U.S.S. MOTHERLOAD WAS FIRST LAUNCHED IN THE SUMMER OF 1983 AS AN ORBITAL SPACE CAFETERIA.
—HOWEVER—
ON SEPT. 13TH, 1991, THE MOTHERLOAD BROKE FREE OF EARTHS GRAVITY AND ROCKETED INTO SPACE... THE ENTIRE CREW WAS RENDERED TOTALLY INSANE AND HAS SPENT THE LAST EIGHT YEARS WANDERING THROUGH THE GALAXY, STOPPING OCCASIONALLY ONLY TO PICK UP MORE BEER!
MOTHERLOAD CONTROL TO BEANBALL THREE! RETURN TO THE WOMB IMMEDIATELY!
NIX, MOTHERLOAD! I IS LEAVIN' YOU FOR GOOD!
BEANBALL
DON'T BE A FOOL, BEANBALL!
I AM LEAVING 'CAUSE DA MAMA DOES NOT LOVE ME!
OF COURSE SHE LOVES YOU, BEANBALL!
I WILL NOT RETURN!
ALL RIGHT BOYS, BLAST DAT BUM OUTTA DA SKY!
WOOSH!!
WOOP!
...DA MOTHER LOAD PROVIDES FER HER OWN.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B 33 P 34 I N 35 S P U D 36 U 37 S
38 S I L A S 39 L R K
40 I T X 41 F L E E 42 B A I 43 L Y
E 44 S 45 G O A 46 A K E
47 A R R O W X 48 V I N C E N T

The solution to Tom Hegeman's crossword puzzle that appeared in the third AUGUST ANNIVERSARY EDITION, August, 1975. Tom is sorry that no one was able to complete the puzzle before his deadline, but hopes you enjoyed it. The indefatigable Mr. Hegeman promises another crossword puzzle within the next year!

## Comics As Art

by Mark Lerer

Comic books have long been thought of as anything but an art form; an entertainment medium, or distraction at best. Recently, however, the graphic-story medium has realized or at least started to realize its potential as a viable storytelling artistic device.

The comic strip/book form, or "graphic-story" as afficianados put it, is the essence of telling a story by using pictures. Visual storytelling is a form which requires a good deal of skill, both in drawing the illustrations, and in laying them out in a novel, imaginative, yet clear way. Another step of the process is the actual writing, the placing of dialogue and narrative, to add to the pictures and complete the storytelling. Naturally, there must be a mesh, that is, words must supplement pictures but not drown them out or repeat what they tell by themselves.

The average person would agree with this definition so far, but would probably find it foolish that such scholarly talk is discussing that medium with no depth, nearly no artistry, and so forth. This person is thinking of the worst of the comic book medium, and probably of the comics of the thirties and forties. True, comic books were created as cheap entertainment for children, but, during the sixties and seventies, the American comic book companies began to realize and outgrow their limitation, with the development of more complex stories, the search for a larger, and older, audience, and the arrival of a new generation of artists and writers.

This new gen eration mostly consisted itself of comic book fans (not fans in the sense of today's fan, who is a well-versed graphic-story expert who attends conventions and such, but just people who grew up on comic books), with generally more sophistication and education than comic book people normally had. They took pride in what they did, and eventually, and most important, generated a new enthusiam among the older professionals in the industry. Because of this series of actually complicated events, many more new fans emerged. Most experts agree that the most important even of the sixties in American comic art is the growth of "Fandom."

No explanation, though, can make more of a point than the comics themselves. Take a look at a copy of the comics of the seventies: CONAN THE BARBARIAN, SWAMP THING, MAN-THING, or from the late sixties: DEADMAN, SPIDERMAN, and a host of others. The quality nowadays can speak for itself.

However, comics is still an industry. Very often their industrial production does not sit well with the theories of art. More than once, the clash between art and commercialism could be seen in the quality and sales of certain comic book series. This is a problem which the industry has yet to resolve, as comic books search for new sizes, prices, formats, and fields to expand into, in the midst of economic hard times.

Comics are indeed an art form, the people creating them being more involved in the product than ever before. The work of such writers and artists as Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, Len Wein, Denny O'Neil, Neal Adams, Jim Steranko, Gil Kane, et al. dramatically points this out. Sample comic books-- art form or no, there's still much plain enjoyment to be gotten out of them.

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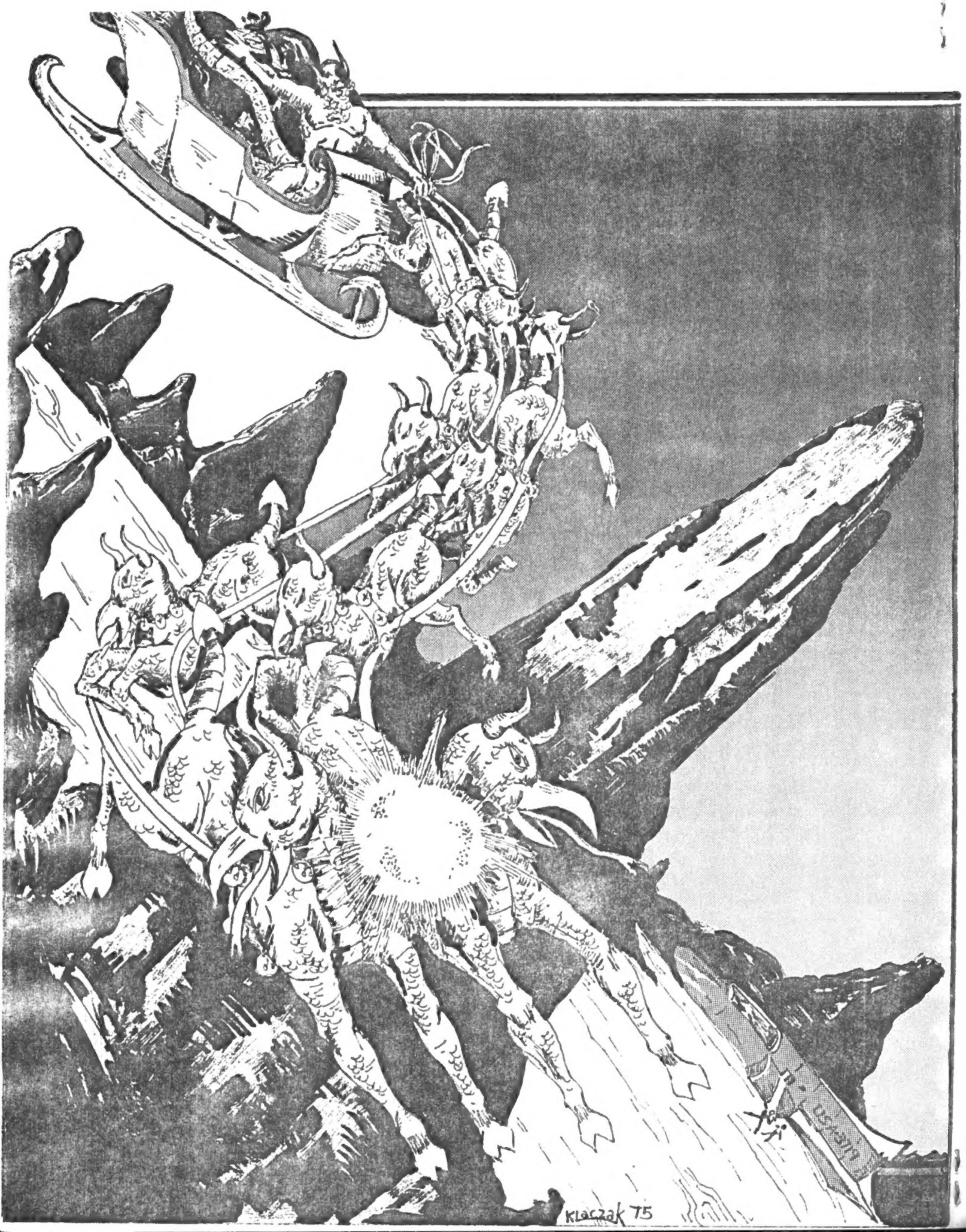
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